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Table Of Contents

1. [14 vegetables to grow in a small garden](#)
2. [References](#)

14 vegetables to grow in a small garden



“I don’t have much space, what are the best vegetables to grow outside in my small garden?”

This has been one of the most often asked questions this year which is encouraging as one of the first pieces of advice is start small! *Why?* Because you’re less likely to give up growing your own if you don’t take on too much at once.

So you’ve installed a couple of raised beds, you’ve cleared a space for some veggies somewhere bright and sunny in your garden, or you’re even

planning on planting vegetables among your flower borders or in containers; now you're wondering what you might grow in your small vegetable garden that will give you the most return for your efforts.

Four tips to bear in mind when growing in a small vegetable garden

1. **Grow what you like to eat** – no sense growing spinach if you can't stand the taste.

2. **Choose vegetable varieties that are expensive in the shops** – shallots, mangetout or early potatoes can all add a few extra cent to your weekly budget which means you may never buy them or they're only ever special treats.

3. **Choose leafy veg that you can harvest a few leaves off** and they will keep growing (known as cut and come again), **beans or peas that will keep producing the more you pick them**, **bulbs that will break up into smaller cloves** or **small vegetables that don't take up much space**.

4. **Grow something different**. Most supermarkets only sell the most popular vegetables with chards and pretty spinach varieties such as Bordeaux never seeing their shelves. Now's a chance for you to grow something you'd like to eat and not be told what to eat by the Buyers.

Suggested vegetables to grow in a small garden

In no particular order, here's a list of vegetables that have grown well in gardens I've worked with of all shapes and sizes. I'm not suggesting you grow them all at once, mix and match and see what grows well for you.



Shallots

Shallots – a member of the *Allium* (onion) family, just one set (immature bulb) planted in the soil will develop into five or six shallots. They also store well over winter.



Garlic Bulb

Garlic – again an Allium, when you plant one clove, it will develop into a whole bulb and [is very easy to grow once you follow the planting guide.](#)



Grow Your Own Kale

Kale – [there are many types of kale from scarlet to Russian, curly green to Tuscany.](#) If you harvest a few leaves off each plant, rather than stripping the plant bare, it will grow more leaves and keep producing for you for months, from late summer through to early spring.



Purple Sprouting Broccoli

Purple Sprouting broccoli (PSB) – as with the kale above, keep picking the small florets from several plants and not stripping one bare. Also you'll be eating this plant during late winter/early spring when there's not too much else around to eat.



Potatoes

Early potatoes – [if you're keen to grow potatoes](#), not only do early varieties grow faster than their main crop cousins, they're usually pricier in the shops and all being well, you'll have harvested them before the blight. Earlies also grow well in containers.



Mangetout – some gardeners don't bother at all with peas finding them too much bother, but we eat mangetout before the peas form in the pods and are delicious eaten straight off the plant. If you miss a few when picking them, they will still form little peas giving you a second chance at them.



Lettuce

Cut & come again [lettuce or salad leaves](#) – there are lots of varieties of lettuce that the leaves are plucked off as you want them and not harvesting the entire plant. We've enjoyed many salad meals with just six plants!



Beetroot

Beetroot – from your garden bears only a slight resemblance to that sold in the shops – it's delicious plus you can eat the leaves! We steam the leaves as a side vegetable here in the Greenside Up kitchen.



Rainbow Chard

Swiss or rainbow chard and spinach – again, versatile cut and come again leafy vegetables that will just keep on giving for months.



Tangled carrots

Early carrots – small round or early – most vegetable gardeners like to grow carrots but are surprised how long they take to develop! Choose small early varieties like Nantes or round Paris Market's for something different. Chanteney carrots are expensive in the shops and are a deliciously sweet variety of carrot too.



Zucchini

Courgettes – they can get quite large depending upon the summer and how exposed your garden is, but one plant of courgettes will feed a family for weeks! Plants can also be grown in large containers of multipurpose compost on a sunny patio.



Cherry tomato

Cherry tomatoes – tiny, sweet cherry tomatoes will grow in beds, borders or hanging baskets and are a good choice if you're new to tomato growing.



Runner Beans

Runner beans – the first time I ever grew runner beans was in a large container outside the door with a makeshift wigwam frame I made for the beans to grow up. It provided enough beans for a few dinners and our children loved watching them grow!



Herbs – all your favourite herbs (with the exception of basil) will grow easily outside. Either make a small herb garden near to your house, grow in window boxes or containers, or add them to the sides or ends of your beds.

No vegetable garden would be complete without **edible flowers** that also act as companion plants – Calendula, French marigolds, Borage and nasturtiums not only bring colour and pazaz to a garden, they also bring pollinators in or can act as sacrificial plants the pests will eat first, leaving your veg alone.



Rainbow Chard & Nasturtiums

Lastly don't forget that fruit, herbs and vegetables [can be grown in containers](#) too so if your beds are full of veg, why not consider growing some fruit outside your door or on your balcony.



Salad Bag

Have you any favourite varieties that would grow well in small gardens?

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References

1. [14 vegetables to grow in a small garden \(greensideup.ie\)](https://www.greensideup.ie/14-vegetables-to-grow-in-a-small-garden/)